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2-080
HORSMONDEN

ESSENGER

Weald



Weekly
Newspaper
of the Year*

*Southern Home Counties 1999

www.kentonline.co.uk

Friday, September 8, 2000

40p



Gipsies go on protest march

POLICE have conceded the right of gipsies to hold a procession through Horsmonden on Sunday the day of their banned horse fair.

But the gipsies will be limited to just 100 taking part in the parade and barred from carrying any placards or banners made from anything other than cardboard or plastic.

The reason given by Supt David Pryer of Weald Police to the gipsies was that he had a "reasonable belief that the proposed procession might result in serious public disorder, serious damage to property or serious disruption to the life of the community of Horsmonden".

Mr Pryer has used powers under the 1986 Public Order Act to limit the procession to a maximum of five horse-drawn vehicles, each drawn by no more than two horses.

The procession will start and finish at Church Meadow. The gipsies have been told it must start at 11.30am and last no longer than one hour. The compromise came after a meeting between police and gipsy representatives.

Gratton Puxon of the Gipsy Council for Education, Culture, Welfare and Civil Rights said: "There will be a lot more than 100 of us there. But those not taking part in the procession will line the streets as spectators."

An alternative fair for gipsies has been organised on the same day at a much larger site near Dartford.